

**SB380 Testimony  
Dusty Crary  
Rancher & Outfitter, Choteau MT**

Chairman Wellborn and members of the committee, good afternoon.

My name is Dusty Crary. I am a rancher from Choteau. My family and I also operate a small wilderness only hunting operation. Note: we do not outfit on our private land but have been providing free public access to high quality whitetail and elk hunting for 4 generations.

I would like to take a moment today to hopefully look over the top of the long standing struggles that have characterized the sportsman, landowner, outfitter love triangle of recent years in this state. Perhaps we can review just what the role of the traditional wilderness outfitter is in Montana. Although we enjoy our work very much, our true purpose is to provide a means for citizens of this country to see and feel and enjoy these absolutely magnificent places that have been set aside for all Americans to experience. It may be hard to realize for some of us who live in close proximity and have the means to travel within these wilderness areas, but we often provide once-in-a-lifetime experiences to grateful people who would otherwise have no way of getting there.

I have been involved over the last 15 years or so in numerous conservation efforts and strategies, primarily on the Rocky Mountain Front(RMF). I have been one of the core proponents in the RMF Heritage Act along with the Mt Wildlife Federation and other endorsing groups and individuals. When the discussion of wilderness takes place and the opposition to such designations state their case, it is quickly countered with the statement that these lands belong to all Americans, not just those who live amongst the communities along the margins. Montanans have a long, proud history of supporting wilderness, but the fact remains that we would not have what we do without the overwhelming support of everyone in this nation who believes in protecting wild lands. If the Heritage Act becomes law, will the response from the wildlife federation be, "thank you once again America for helping us to secure for future generations some of the finest wildlife habitat in the world. Now run along, we Montana sportsmen have some hunting to do".

The state of MT doesn't owe me or any other outfitter a living. But I believe it does owe the people of this country who are not as fortunate as we who live here, a fair and reasonable chance to experience a backcountry hunting trip in their wilderness. SB380 will help make that more of a reality and I urge your favorable consideration.

Thank you

Dusty Crary